

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2007
INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ABLD, ASEC, AFSP, UR, US
SUBJECT: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO PRESENT CHANCERY, PROPERTY
NO. 01284

REF: (A) STATE 301095, (B) MOSCOW 19195

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE IS SOME CONFUSION OVER THE SCOPE AND CATEGORY OF THIS PROJECT. THE TOTAL COST, ESTIMATED BY UPDK, IS \$2600.

2. THE PROJECT CONSISTS OF REPAIRING AN EXISTING REPEAT EXISTING FIRE ESCAPE ON THE REAR OUTSIDE WALL OF THE CHANCERY WHICH RUNS DOWNWARD ALONG THE SOUTH CENTRAL STAIRCASE. ALSO INCLUDED IS A NEW STANDRAD SOVIET FIRE ESCAPE WHICH WILL RUN ALONG THE REAR OUTSIDE WALL PARALLEL TO CENTRAL STAIRCASE. THIS FIRE ESCAPE WILL RUN FROM THE GROUND TO A STAIRWELL WINDOW MIDWAY BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH FLOORS. A SIMILAR FIRE ESCAPE WILL BE INSTALLED ON THE REAR OF NORTH WING RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS AT THE CORNER WHERE THE NORTH WING AND CENTRAL WINGS MEET.

3. THESE FIRE ESCAPES ARE ESSENTIALLY STEEL LADDERS FIXED TO THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING AND ARE INTENDED TO REPLACE A NUMBER OF DANGEROUS, FLEXIBLE LADDERS WHICH WOULD BE THROWN OUT OF WINDOWS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE. THE FIRE ESCAPES ARE OF STANDARD SOVIET MANUFACTURE AND ARE SIMILAR TO THAT ALREADY ON THE BUILDING AND THOSE ON NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS. ALL ARE OR WILL BE INSTALLED ON REAR OF THE EMBASSY COMPLEX AND NONE WILL BE VISABLE FROM ANY STREET OR ANY AREA TO WHICH THE
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PUBLIC HAS ACCESS.

4. THERE IS NO ACCESS TO ANY ROOF, EXCEPT BY THE EXISTING FIRE ESCAPE WHICH ALREADY LEADS TO THE SOUTH WING ROOF. NO FIRE ESCAPE TOUCHES THE CLASSIFIED AREAS OF THE CHANCERY EXCEPT THE ONE TO BE BUILT TO THE STAIRWAY WINDOW MIDWAY BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH FLOORS. THIS WINDOW WILL BE BARRED BY A STEEL INTERIOR GATE WHICH CAN ONLY BE OPENED FROM THE INSIDE. ALL FIRE ESCAPE PLANS HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE POST RSO.

5. THE NEED FOR IMPROVED FIRE SAFETY FOR THE EMBASSY IS CRITICAL. PRESENTLY THERE IS ONLY ONE STAIRWAY WHICH REACHES THE 7TH FLOOR AND ABOVE, THE SOUTH CENTRAL STAIRCASE. A FIRE IN THIS STAIRWELL, BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SEVENTH FLOORS WOULD BLOCK THE ONLY EXIT FOR THE DOZENS OF PERSONS WHO WORK IN THE UPPER PART OF THE CHANCERY. ALL OTHER STAIRCASES ORIGINALLY LEADING TO THE SEVENTH FLOOR AND ABOVE WERE SEALED PERMANENTLY YEARS AGO FOR SECURITY PURPOSES. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT ELECTRICAL POWER CAPACITY COMPOUNDS THE FIRE SAFETY PROBLEMS. THE RECENT FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTORS EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE CHANCERY. THE PRESENT PROJECT REPAIRS THE EXISTING FIRE ESCAPE AND PROVIDES AN ALTERNATE MEANS OF EXIT FROM THE CHANCERY.

6. THE COST OF THE PROJECT, \$2600, WILL BE CHARGED TO M&R FUNDS SINCE PART OF THE WORK IS REPAIR TO AN EXISTING FIRE ESCAPE. IT IS THE EMBASSY'S OPINION THAT 6 FAM 752 AND 753 DO NOT APPLY TO THIS PROJECT. CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN APPLICABILITY OF 753 B, H, I, J, L, M, AND N. UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES SOME OBJECTION OF WHICH THE EMBASSY IS UNWARE AND GIVEN THE CRITICAL FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AS WELL AS THE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING SERVICES FROM UPDK, THE EMBASSY PLANS TO PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT.
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